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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 9639
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1857
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001738

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DEPT FOR SA, IO, G (J FERRAO) AND P (A MANUEL AND T
BRADLEY), NSC FOR ABRAMS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/12/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: GOI HOPES FOR RESPONSE ON UN DEMOCRACY FUND
PROPOSALS

REF: A. NEW DELHI 759

[1](#)B. STATE 24430

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (U) This message contains an ACTION REQUEST. Please see
para 7.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: MEA Joint Secretary (UN Political) Sanjiv
Arora told PolCouns and Poloff on March 13 that India is
awaiting a US response to its proposal to set up a New Delhi
office of the UN Democracy Fund. The GOI also looks forward
to advancing democracy cooperation under the Global Democracy
Initiative, but in response to our request for Indian
involvement in the BMENA initiative, MEA cautioned that some
areas of the world remain sensitive for the Indian public.
Post requests Washington provide a response to the GOI
proposal. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Arora met with PolCouns and Poloff to discuss the
outcome of the March 6 meeting of the Advisory Board to the
UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF). Reviewing his readout from the
Indian representative at the UNDEF organizational meeting,
Arora commented that he was pleased to see a decision to
align UNDEF's activities as a complement to the
responsibilities of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). He
also welcomed the US announcement of an additional USD 7.9
million contribution to the Fund.

India Waiting for US Response on UNDEF Office

[1](#)4. (C) Arora reminded us that India had proposed to Under
Secretary Dobriansky a New Delhi office to operationalize

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UNDEF projects (Ref A), and was awaiting a formal US response. PolCouns noted general US concerns about such an effort, including the desire not to turn this initiative into "just another UN office in New Delhi," and to avoid the appearance that this was a way for India to repatriate its own donation to the Fund. India's proposal would be stronger, he emphasized, if there were a specific vision of additional benefits to democracy promotion that would arise from the creation of such an office, and if it were clearly branded as an Indian initiative, as we suggested in the February 22 non-paper that Under Secretary Burns presented.

15. (C) In response, Arora reiterated the GOI's view that the proposed office would be a center for democracy promotion, not simply a management office for UNDEF. New Delhi had not yet finalized any detailed concept, but would be able to prepare a non-paper to outline its ideas if it would be helpful, he said. In the meantime, the GOI had made the proposal in the Global Issues Forum in order to get a US reaction, and would appreciate feedback from the USG. India would eventually make such a proposal to the UNDEF Advisory Board, but since the US and India had "led the way" on the Fund, New Delhi would appreciate an initial response from Washington.

BMENA Initiative

16. (C) PolCouns raised the question of India joining the Foundation for the Future of the Broader Middle East and North African Initiative (BMENA) as a contributing partner (Ref B), emphasizing the strong role India could play as an example of democracy in an Asian setting. Arora expressed interest and noted that MEA was still reviewing the idea and would convey a considered response later. The MEA Americas

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division reported subsequently that India was very eager to move ahead on democracy promotion activities outlined in the March 2 Joint Statement, but warned that GOI consensus might be harder to achieve in regions (like the Middle East) where India has competing equities (to include a large domestic Muslim constituency which is skeptical of US policy).

ACTION REQUEST: RESPONSE TO INDIAN PROPOSAL

17. (C) Charge will meet on March 14 with Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma, who has taken a leading role in promoting the Global Democracy Initiative within the Indian system. Post would appreciate Washington guidance on any US reaction to the New Delhi UNDEF office proposal, as well as other feedback from the UNDEF Advisory Board meeting, looking ahead to the June meeting and our shared desire to operationalize the fund as quickly as possible.

18. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)
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